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(54) Method of and apparatus for determining hydrogen peroxide by Raman scattering

(57) An excitation beam generated from a light source (1) is separated into a measuring beam and a reference beam by an optical path adjusting optical system (2) including a beam splitter, so that the measuring beam is applied to a sample which is stored in a cell (3). Raman scattering light which is generated from the sample is detected by a spectral detector (6) including a spectroscopy through a scattering light path adjusting optical system (4) and a wavelength selector (5). In a

spectrum obtained by the spectral detector (6), a peak of Raman scattering in which wavenumber shift from the wavelength of the excitation beam is present at 800 to 920 cm^{-1} is employed to make quantitative measurement of hydrogen peroxide. Hydrogen peroxide contained in an aqueous solution can be simply quantitatively analyzed through optical analysis means.

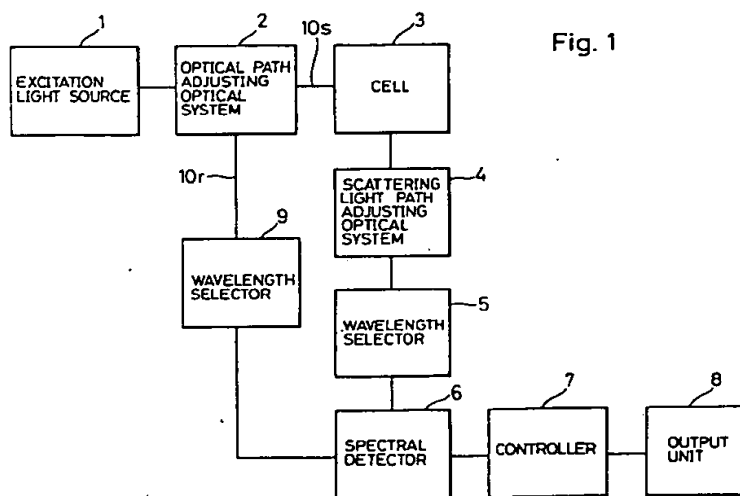


Fig. 1

EP 0 714 025 A1

Description

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Field of the Invention

The present invention relates to a method of determining hydrogen peroxide for quality-controlling a commercially available aqueous solution containing hydrogen peroxide or another substance containing hydrogen peroxide, or in a hydrogen peroxide formation or decomposition system in chemical reaction such as enzyme reaction, and an apparatus which is employed therefor.

Description of the Background Art

In relation to determination of hydrogen peroxide in an aqueous solution, the following methods are known in the art:

- (1) A method employing a hydrogen peroxide electrode.
- (2) Leuco or oxidation condensation type spectrophotometry (refer to Japanese Patent Laying-Open Gazette No. 59-182361 (1984)), which is typically adapted to react hydrogen peroxide with 4-aminoantipyrin and phenol for coloring, and to measure absorption of the coloring reaction solution at 505 nm.
- (3) A fluorescent method, which is adapted to react hydrogen peroxide with homovanillic acid to generate fluorescence, and to measure the fluorescence.
- (4) Chemiluminescence, which is adapted to excite a substrate of luminol or lucigenin through oxidizing power of hydrogen peroxide under presence of a catalyst such as POD (peroxidase) and to detect light generated when the substrate returns from the excited state to the ground state.

On the other hand, a method called Raman scattering analysis is included in optical analysis methods. This Raman scattering analysis method utilizes the following phenomenon: When specific molecules are irradiated with radiation energy which is in the form of electromagnetic waves, small parts of molecules holding photons do not return to original vibration levels but fall to those having different electron ground states after releasing the held photons. Therefore, levels of energy released from these molecules are specific thereto, and the specific molecules can be identified by detecting the levels of the released energy as electromagnetic waves.

While an energy beam which is released by Raman scattering may be in a state lower than absorbed energy (stokes Raman scattering) or higher than the same (anti-stokes Raman scattering), the intensity of anti-stokes Raman scattering is extremely weak since the number of electrons which are in excited states is by far smaller than that of electrons which are in ground states. Thus, the method of identifying specific molecules generally employs measurement by stokes Raman scattering.

However, there has been reported no example of qualitatively or quantitatively analyzing hydrogen peroxide which is contained in an aqueous solution, although measurement of Raman scattering of hydrogen peroxide in a vapor phase has been reported (refer to Journal of Raman Spectroscopy 2 (1974), pp. 125 - 132). While three peaks of 3607 cm^{-1} , 1393.5 cm^{-1} and 863.1 cm^{-1} are observed in this report in relation to a Raman spectrum, this is adapted to detect -O-O- parts in hydrogen peroxide. This Raman spectrum is adapted to make structural analysis of hydrogen peroxide in the vapor phase. And since a detector described in the above Journal of Raman Spectroscopy is not high in sensitivity, it could not carry out quantitative measurement.

The aforementioned methods (1) to (4) of determining hydrogen peroxide in aqueous solution samples have the following problems:

The method (1) is adapted to measure current change which is caused when hydrogen peroxide is electrically oxidized, and hence an influence is exerted by a reducing substance coexisting in the sample solution.

In the leuco type spectrophotometry (2), an error is readily caused by coloring of a reagent blank resulting from natural oxidation of a chromogen. In the oxidation condensation type spectrophotometry (2), on the other hand, a negative error is readily caused by a reducing substance. Further, hydrogen oxide of 2 moles is required for forming a pigment of 1 mole, and hence this method is unsuitable for determination of a component of a small quantity.

In the fluorescent method (3), sensitivity remarkably depends on the performance of an apparatus. Thus, this method is extremely influenced by a temperature and a coexistent substance.

In the chemiluminescence (4), a sufficient quantity of light emission is obtained only under alkaline conditions. The reaction rate is slow and reproducibility is insufficient. Further, light emission intensity is reduced upon coexistence of protein.

The Raman measurement example of hydrogen peroxide in a vapor phase state is directed to structural analysis, and cannot determine the concentration of hydrogen peroxide. Even if an attempt is made to detect -O-O-parts in hydrogen peroxide in an aqueous solution phase, characteristics of hydrogen peroxide are varied in the aqueous solution due

to influence by hydrogen bonding of water, and hence the detection is difficult. Thus, determination of hydrogen peroxide is carried out by any of the aforementioned methods (1) to (4).

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

An object of the present invention is to enable simple quantitative analysis of hydrogen peroxide in an aqueous solution through optical analysis means.

According to the present invention, a sample solution which is introduced into a cell is irradiated with an excitation beam of a single wavelength, and scattering light from the sample solution is separated into its spectral components, so that quantitative measurement is made through a Raman scattering peak in which wavenumber shift from the wavelength of the excitation beam is present at 800 to 920 cm^{-1} in its spectrum.

When coherent light is incident upon hydrogen peroxide, hydrogen peroxide is polarized by vibration of the interior thereof and causes specific angular vibration, to obtain a spectrum by this angular vibration, if classically stated. When hydrogen peroxide molecules are irradiated with coherent light, small parts of specific molecules holding photons do not return to original levels but fall to those having different electron ground states after releasing the held photons, if quantum mechanically stated. Namely, vibrational energy is released due to change of the vibration excitation states caused by energy of the photons, or since hydrogen peroxide molecules which are in vibration excitation states change vibration states of adjacent ones. Qualification and determination of hydrogen peroxide are carried out by separating a spectrum which is generated at this time into its spectral components.

According to this method, molecules of hydrogen peroxide are irradiated with light energy by a radiant energy beam (coherent light such as a laser beam, in particular) which is in the form of an arbitrary type of electromagnetic waves, and scattering light thereof is separated into its spectral components. Qualification and determination of hydrogen peroxide are carried out through a peak having specific wave length in the spectrum. It has been discovered that the spectrum of hydrogen peroxide obtained by this method is present at 800 to 920 cm^{-1} in wavenumber shift (i.e., the shift wavenumber of Raman scattering). The method according to the present invention is adapted to determine hydrogen peroxide through the peak.

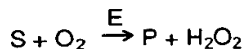
The novel and useful point of the method according to the present invention resides in that hydrogen peroxide molecules can be directly determined. Since no secondary operation of reacting a light emitting substance by reducing or oxidizing power of hydrogen peroxide is added dissimilarly to the prior art, no reaction error is caused in the method according to the present invention.

A measuring apparatus for carrying out this method comprises an integrating-spherical cell holder having a reflecting inner surface, a cell having a spherical portion, which is engaged in the cell holder, for storing a sample solution, a light source part for irradiating the sample solution in the cell provided in the cell holder with an exciting beam of a single wavelength, and a spectral detection part for receiving scattering light by the sample solution in the cell provided in the cell holder and separating the scattering light into its spectral components for detecting Raman scattering light intensity of hydrogen peroxide.

The spherical cell is engaged in the integrating-spherical cell holder having a reflecting inner surface, whereby the exciting beam is multipath-reflected in the cell so that Raman scattering can be reinforced.

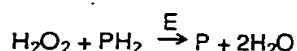
The method according to the present invention can be applied not only to measurement of an aqueous solution sample already containing hydrogen peroxide, but to monitoring of a reaction system such as enzyme reaction of forming or decomposing hydrogen peroxide.

In a first example, the method according to the present invention is applied to a reaction system of forming hydrogen peroxide by specific reaction between an oxidizing enzyme and a biological or metabolic component. Assuming that S represents a substrate, P represents a product and E represents an enzyme, the quantity of hydrogen peroxide which is formed by the following reaction is measured by the method according to the present invention. The quantity of the substrate S or the product P can be obtained from the measured quantity of hydrogen peroxide. Further, enzyme activity can also be measured from the measured quantity of hydrogen peroxide.



Exemplary combinations of the substrate S and the enzyme E are glucose and glucose oxidase, cholesterol and cholesterol oxidase, urea and uricase, pyruvic acid and oxidase pyruvate, and hexose and pyranose oxidase, while the combination is not restricted to these so far as enzyme reaction of forming hydrogen peroxide is caused.

A second example is adapted to make reaction through an enzyme which is specifically reacted with hydrogen peroxide and decomposes the same, for measuring hydrogen peroxide by the method according to the present invention. Assuming that PH_2 represents a reactant, P represents a product and E represents an enzyme, the quantity of the reactant PH_2 or the product P can be obtained by measuring the quantity of reduced hydrogen peroxide by the following enzyme reaction. Further, enzyme activity can also be measured by the measured quantity of reduced hydrogen peroxide.



While the enzyme can be a dehydrogenase such as peroxidase or catalase, the present invention is also applicable to reaction which is related to another enzyme so far as the same is conjugate reaction with hydrogen peroxide.

It is possible to first label a reactant with a compound such as peroxidase or catalase having reactivity with hydrogen peroxide and to thereafter react the reactant with a constant quantity of hydrogen peroxide, thereby estimating the quantity of the reactant from that of reduced hydrogen peroxide. For example, the quantity of an antibody is measured by reacting an anti-antibody, which is labelled with peroxidase, with an antigen-antibody reaction combination, performing BF separation of separating and removing the unreacted labelled anti-antibody from that reacted with the antigen-antibody reaction combination, and thereafter reacting peroxidase with hydrogen peroxide, for measuring the quantity of reduced hydrogen peroxide. Either the antigen or the antibody, or either the antibody or the anti-antibody may be labelled. The antigen-antibody reaction is well known to those skilled in the art, and a method of making the antigen-antibody reaction is not limited.

According to the present invention, hydrogen peroxide concentration can be determined on the basis of intensity of the peak of the Raman shift wavenumber of 800 to 920 cm^{-1} by irradiating the sample solution with the exciting beam and detecting Raman scattering light, whereby hydrogen peroxide can be directly determined with no requirement for a secondary operation such as reaction of a light emitting substance through reducing or oxidizing power of hydrogen peroxide dissimilarly to the prior art, and hence errors following the reaction are reduced.

Most enzyme reaction generates hydrogen peroxide. While enzyme reaction is generally monitored with a color former, the enzyme reaction can be directly monitored by the inventive method with no employment of a color former.

The foregoing and other objects, features, aspects and advantages of the present invention will become more apparent from the following detailed description of the present invention when taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Fig. 1 is a block diagram schematically showing a hydrogen peroxide determination apparatus according to the present invention;

Figs. 2A and 2B are sectional views showing cell parts for extracting 180° reinforced scattering and 90° reinforced scattering in the apparatus respectively;

Fig. 3 illustrates Raman spectra which were measured through standard samples having hydrogen peroxide concentration levels of 0 to 30 %;

Fig. 4 illustrates a hydrogen peroxide calibration curve formed through the peaks shown in Fig. 3;

Fig. 5 illustrates the Raman spectrum of a commercially available contact lens washing solution;

Fig. 6 illustrates such an example that the result of Fig. 5 is applied to the calibration curve of Fig. 4;

Fig. 7 illustrates the Raman spectrum of a commercially available peroxide antiseptic solution; and

Fig. 8 illustrates such an example that the result of Fig. 7 is applied to the calibration curve of Fig. 4.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Fig. 1 shows a measuring apparatus for determining hydrogen oxide according to an embodiment of the present invention.

Numeral 1 denotes an excitation light source for measuring Raman scattering light, which is formed by a laser unit a lamp. The laser unit can be selected from those of a wide wavelength range over near-ultraviolet to near-infrared regions such as a continuously oscillating Ar ion, Kr ion, He-Ne, He-Cd and Nd:YAG laser units, a semiconductor laser unit and a pulse laser unit. When only an oscillation beam of the laser unit is utilized as an excitation beam, the laser unit may be combined with an interference filter or a monochromater, in order to block spontaneous emission. However, spontaneous emission may also be applied for wavelength calibration of a spectrum. In the case that the lamp such as a xenon lamp is used as a light source, a single wavelength as an excitation beam is selected from an emission of the lamp by using a wavelength selecting means such as a filter or a monochromater.

The excitation beam which is emitted from the light source 1 is separated into a measuring beam 10s and a reference beam 10r by an optical path adjusting optical system 2 including a beam splitter, so that the measuring beam 10s is applied to a sample stored in a cell 3. Raman scattering light which is generated from the sample is detected by a spectral detector 6 through a scattering light path adjusting optical system 4 for adjusting the luminous flux and a wavelength selector 5 such as a filter for removing an excitation beam component from the scattering light.

In order to correct fluctuation of excitation beam intensity, on the other hand, the reference beam 10r is detected by the spectral detector 6 through a wavelength selector 9 including a wavelength selector such as a filter of the same

characteristics as the wavelength selector 5 of the measuring beam side and an optical system for adjusting an optical path.

A controller 7 controls the operation of the spectroscopy of the spectral detector 6, and corrects a Raman scattering light value detected by the spectral detector 6 with a detected reference beam value indicating the light source intensity for obtaining a Raman spectrum, thereby determining hydrogen peroxide. Numeral 8 denotes an output unit such as a printer or a CRT.

Figs. 2A and 2B show examples of the cell 3 respectively.

Referring to Fig. 2A, the cell 3 is in the form of a round bottom flask which is made of a transparent material such as glass, quartz or polyethylene terephthalates, for storing a sample solution. This cell 3 is engaged in an integrating-spherical cell holder 10a. The cell holder 10a has a reflecting inner surface. The cell holder 10a is provided with a window for receiving an excitation beam 12 which is emitted from an excitation light source and extracting scattering light in a direction which is at an angle of 180° to the direction of incidence. The excitation beam 12 is bent by a mirror 14, and introduced into the cell 3 through the window of the cell holder 10a. Numeral 16 denotes a condenser lens for condensing the scattering light outgoing from the window of the cell holder 10a. While the mirror 14 is arranged on an optical axis of the condenser lens 16, the mirror 14 is sufficiently small as compared with the aperture of the condenser lens 16, and will not inhibit the condenser lens 16 from condensing the scattering light. The excitation beam which is applied to the sample solution stored in the cell 3 is repeatedly reflected by the inner surface of the cell holder 10a, extracted from the window of the cell holder 10a with Raman scattering, and guided toward a spectral detector.

Referring to Fig. 2B, on the other hand, a cell holder 10b is provided with windows for extracting scattering light in a direction which is at 90° with respect to the direction of incidence of an excitation beam 12. The cell 3 is engaged in the integrating-spherical cell holder 10b having a reflecting inner surface, while the cell holder 10b is provided with windows for introducing the excitation beam 12 from a direction y and extracting scattering light 18 in a direction x which is at an angle of 90° to the direction y.

Referring again to Fig. 1, the scattering light which is extracted from the cell 3 is condensed by the optical system 4, so that the excitation beam component is removed by the wavelength selector 5 and Raman scattering light is separated into its spectral components and detected by the spectral detector 6. The spectral detector 6 corrects a signal with the intensity of the reference beam and amplifies the same, so that the signal is thereafter incorporated in the controller 7 and subjected to arithmetic processing for detecting a peak of hydrogen peroxide. Processing such as a numerical operation is carried out to identify and determine a characteristic peak of hydrogen peroxide.

Example utilizing the measuring apparatus shown in Fig. 1 is now described. The excitation light source 1 comprised an argon laser of 100 mW in output so that its 514.5 nm oscillation beam was employed, while the cell 3 shown in Fig. 2B was employed to make measurement with an ultraviolet/visible spectrophotometer comprising a Peltier-controlled CCD (charge-coupled device) detection element serving as the spectral detector 6.

(Formation of Calibration Curve)

A 30 % standard hydrogen peroxide reagent (Lot 3018930428 by Santoku Chemical Industries Co., Ltd.) was diluted with distilled water to prepare hydrogen peroxide standard samples of 15 %, 10 %, 5 %, 3 %, 1% and 0.5 % respectively, and Raman scattering light levels of these standard samples and water were measured. Fig. 3 shows the resulting Raman spectra. Referring to Fig. 3, the spectrum of water was subtracted from those of the respective standard samples as a background. Peaks are observed in a position shifted by 878.8 cm^{-1} from the position of the excitation beam wavelength.

Fig. 4 illustrates a hydrogen peroxide calibration curve formed by plotting the peak intensity levels at 878.8 cm^{-1} shown in Fig. 4 on the axis of ordinates, while plotting concentration values on the axis of abscissas.

(Sample Measurement)

Then, commercially available hydrogen peroxide solutions were determined through the calibration curve.

(1) Measurement of Commercially Available Contact Lens Washing Solution:

A commercially available contact lens washing solution (Consept F (trade name) imported by Barndshaind Co., Ltd.) (calculated as 2.98 % from indicated concentration) was measured in a similar manner to the measurement for formation of the calibration curve, to obtain a Raman spectrum shown in Fig. 5. In this Raman spectrum, the spectrum of distilled water was subtracted from the spectrum of the sample as a background. Fig. 6 illustrates the peak intensity of this spectrum at a Raman shift wavenumber of 878.8 cm^{-1} , which was applied to the calibration curve of Fig. 4. Hydrogen peroxide concentration which was estimated on the basis of this result was 3.13 %.

(2) Measurement of Commercially Available Peroxide Antiseptic Solution:

A commercially available peroxide antiseptic solution (product by Fujimi Seiyaku Co., Ltd. ; indicated as 3 W/V %) was measured in a similar manner to the measurement for formation of the calibration curve, to obtain a

Raman spectrum shown in Fig. 7. Also in this Raman spectrum, the spectrum of distilled water was subtracted from the spectrum of the sample as a background. Fig. 8 illustrates the peak intensity of this spectrum at a Raman shift wavenumber of 878.8 cm^{-1} , which was applied to the calibration curve of Fig. 4. Hydrogen peroxide concentration which was estimated on the basis of this result was 3.04 %.

Thus, it is possible to determine hydrogen peroxide which is contained in a sample solution through a peak at a Raman shift wavenumber of $800\text{ to }920\text{ cm}^{-1}$.

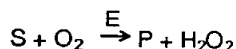
Although the present invention has been described and illustrated in detail, it is clearly understood that the same is by way of illustration and example only and is not to be taken by way of limitation, the spirit and scope of the present invention being limited only by the terms of the appended claims.

Claims

1. A method of determining hydrogen peroxide characterized by comprising the steps of:
 irradiating a sample solution in a cell (3) with an excitation beam of a single wavelength,
 separating scattering light from said sample solution into its spectral components,
 and performing quantitative measurement through a peak of Raman scattering in which wavenumber shift from said wavelength of said excitation beam is present at $800\text{ to }920\text{ cm}^{-1}$ in its spectrum.

2. The method of determining hydrogen peroxide in accordance with claim 1, wherein
 said sample solution is an aqueous solution sample already containing hydrogen peroxide.

3. The method of determining hydrogen peroxide in accordance with claim 1, wherein
 said sample solution is a reactive solution being so prepared as to cause enzyme reaction of generating hydrogen peroxide, and a reaction system generating hydrogen peroxide by the following enzyme reaction assuming that S represents a substrate, P represents a product and E represents an enzyme:



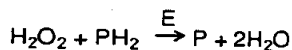
4. The method of determining hydrogen peroxide in accordance with claim 3, wherein
 the quantity of said substrate S or said product P is obtained by measurement of the quantity of generated hydrogen peroxide.

5. The method of determining hydrogen peroxide in accordance with claim 3, wherein
 enzyme activity is measured by measuring the quantity of generated hydrogen peroxide.

6. The method of determining hydrogen peroxide in accordance with claim 3, wherein
 said enzyme is an oxidase.

7. The method of determining hydrogen peroxide in accordance with claim 6, wherein
 a combination of said substrate and said enzyme is selected from a group consisting of glucose and glucose oxidase, cholesterol and cholesterol oxidase, urea and uricase, pyruvic acid and oxidase pyruvate, and hexose and pyranose oxidase.

8. The method of determining hydrogen peroxide in accordance with claim 1, wherein
 said sample solution is a reactive solution being so prepared as to cause enzyme reaction of decomposing hydrogen peroxide, and a reaction system reducing hydrogen peroxide in the following enzyme reaction assuming that PH_2 represents a reactant, P represents a product and E represents an enzyme:



9. The method of determining hydrogen peroxide in accordance with claim 8, wherein
 the quantity of said reactant PH_2 or said product P is obtained by measuring the amount of reduced hydrogen peroxide.

10. The method of determining hydrogen peroxide in accordance with claim 8, wherein
 said enzyme E is a dehydrogenase consisting of peroxidase or catalase.

11. The method of determining hydrogen peroxide in accordance with claim 1, wherein
said sample solution is a reaction system containing a reactant labelled with a compound having reactivity with hydrogen peroxide and a constant quantity of hydrogen peroxide, the quantity of said reactant being obtained from that of reduced hydrogen peroxide.
12. The method of determining hydrogen peroxide in accordance with claim 11, wherein
an anti-antibody being labelled with peroxidase is reacted with an antigen-antibody reaction combination, subjected to BF separation and thereafter reacted with hydrogen peroxide so that the quantity of said antibody is obtained by measuring that of reduced said hydrogen peroxide.
13. A determination apparatus for hydrogen peroxide characterized by comprising:
an integrating-spherical cell holder(10a, 10b) having a reflecting inner surface;
a cell(3) having a portion, being spherically formed to be engaged in said cell holder(10a, 10b) for a sample solution;
a light source part(1) for irradiating said sample solution in said cell(3) provided in said cell holder(10a, 10b) with an excitation beam of a single wavelength; and
a spectral detection part(4, 5, 6) for receiving scattering light by said sample solution in said cell(3) provided in said cell holder(10a, 10b), separating the scattering light into its spectral components and detecting Raman scattering light intensity of hydrogen peroxide.
14. The determination apparatus for hydrogen peroxide in accordance with claim 13, wherein
said cell holder(10a) is provided with a window for receiving said excitation beam(12) from said excitation light source(1) and extracting said scattering light in a direction being at 180° with respect to the direction of incidence, and
a condenser lens(16) is provided on an optical path from said cell(3) to said spectral detection part(4, 5, 6) for condensing said scattering light outgoing from said window,
a mirror(14) being arranged on said optical path between said window and said condenser lens(16) for bending said excitation beam(12) and introducing said excitation beam(12) into said cell(3) through said window.
15. The determination apparatus in accordance with claim 13, wherein
said cell holder(10b) is provided with an entrance window for receiving said excitation beam(12) from said excitation light source(1) and an outgoing window for extracting said scattering beam in a direction being at 90 ° with respect to the direction of incidence.

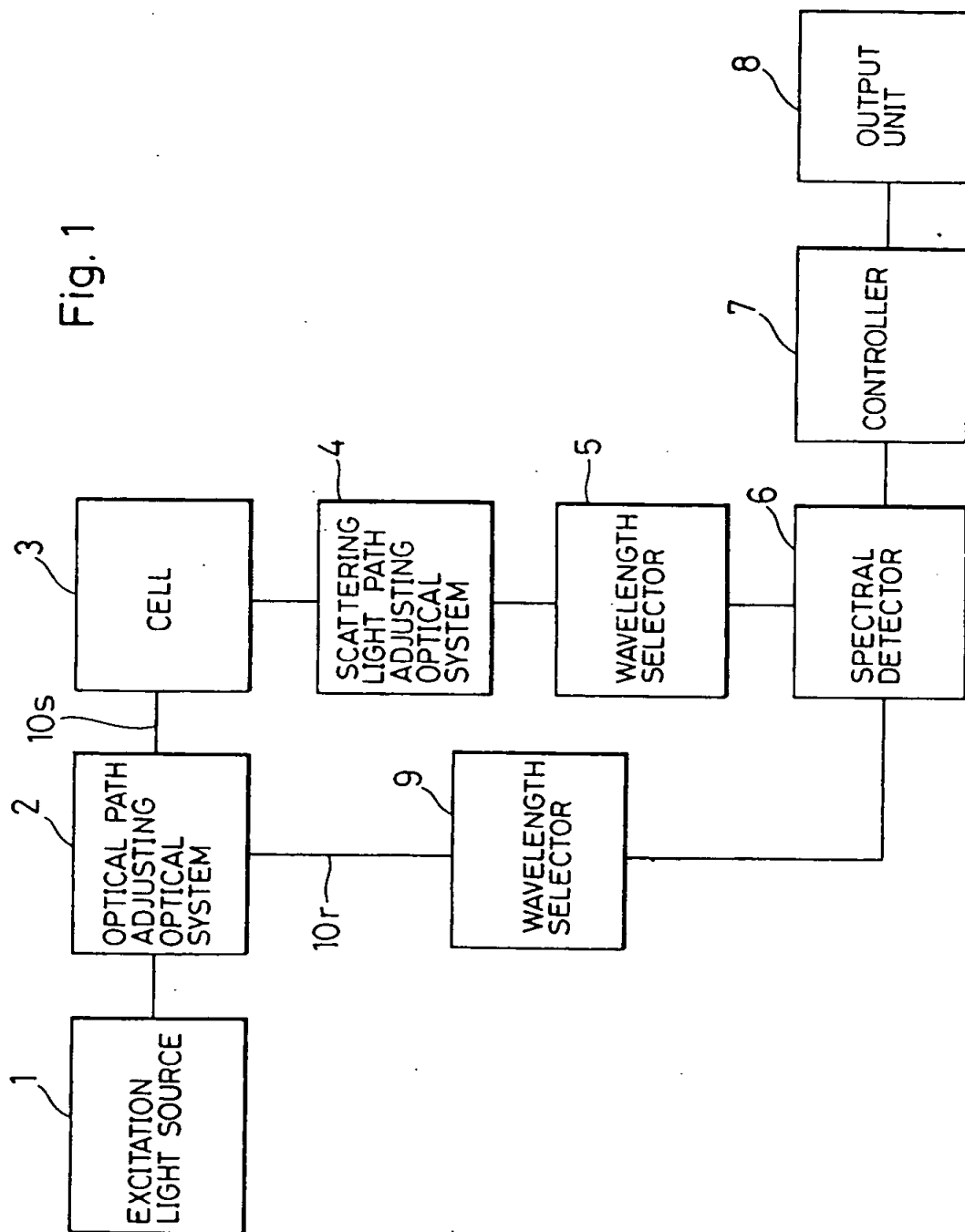


Fig. 2A

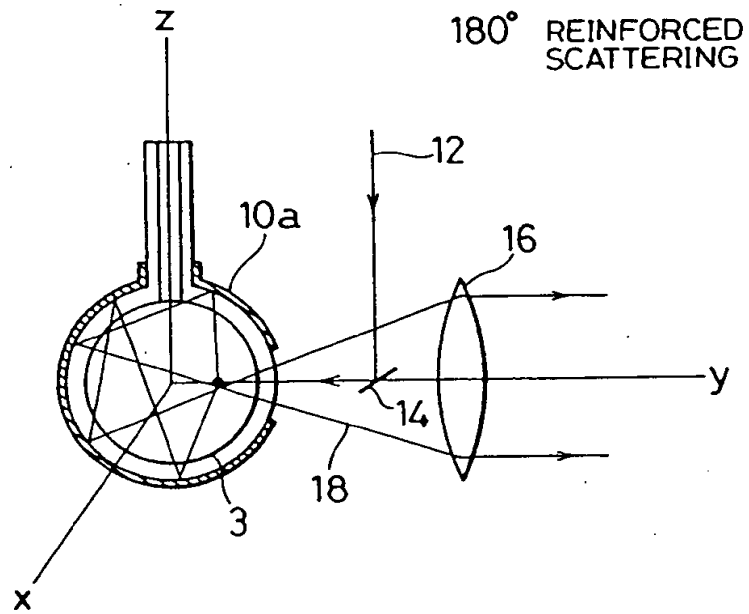


Fig. 2B

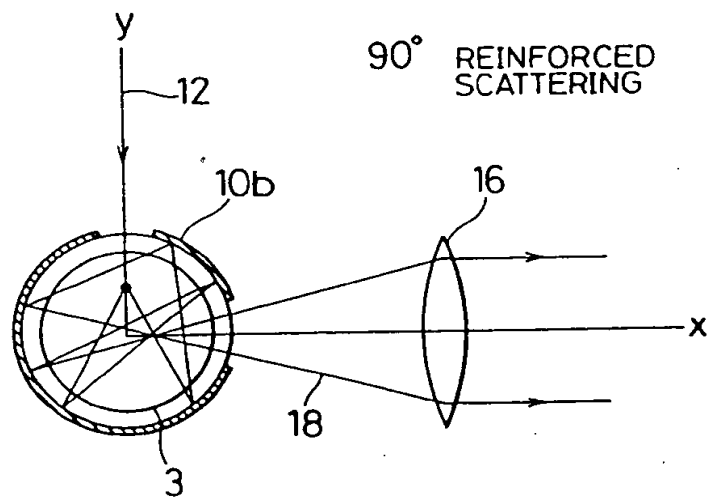


Fig. 3

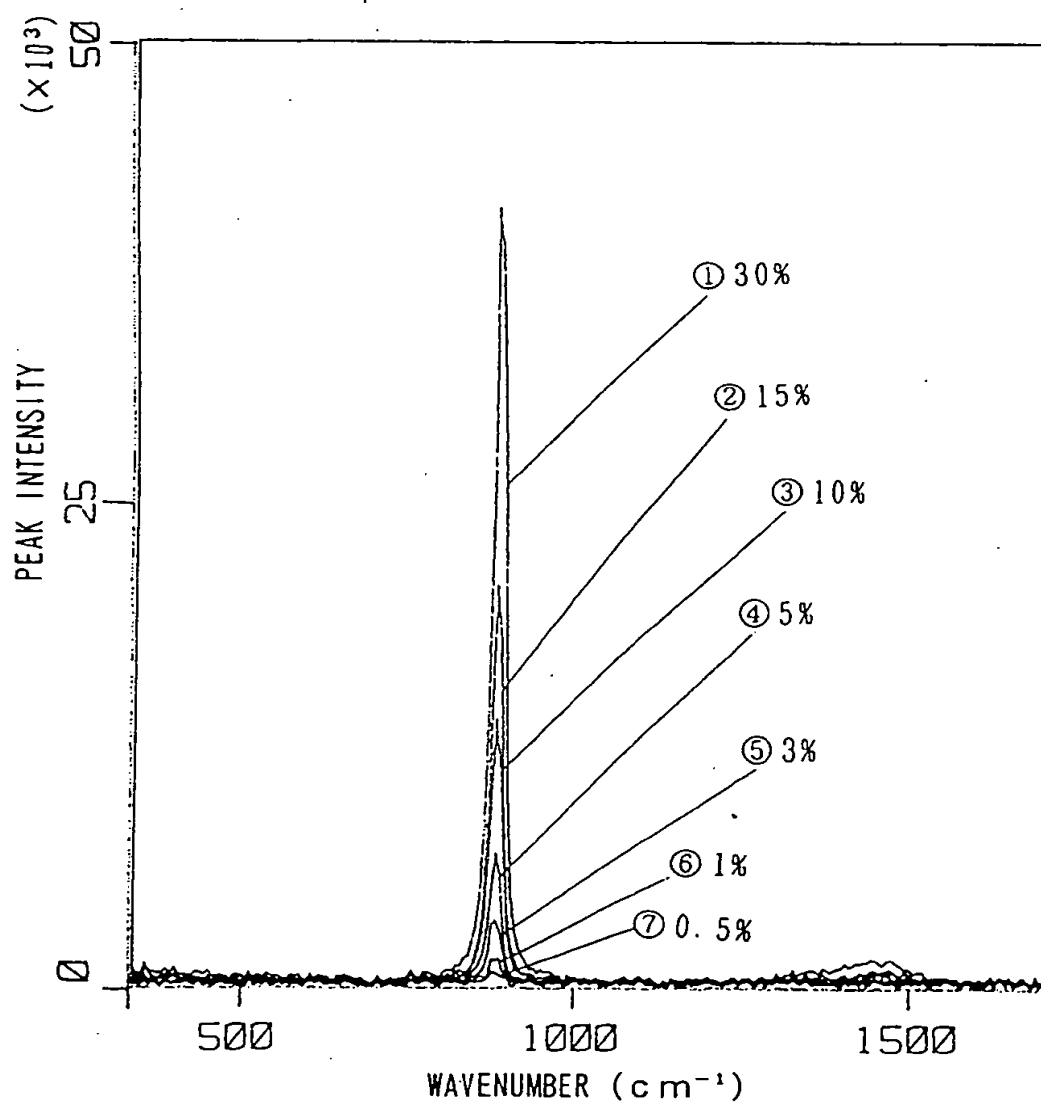


Fig. 4

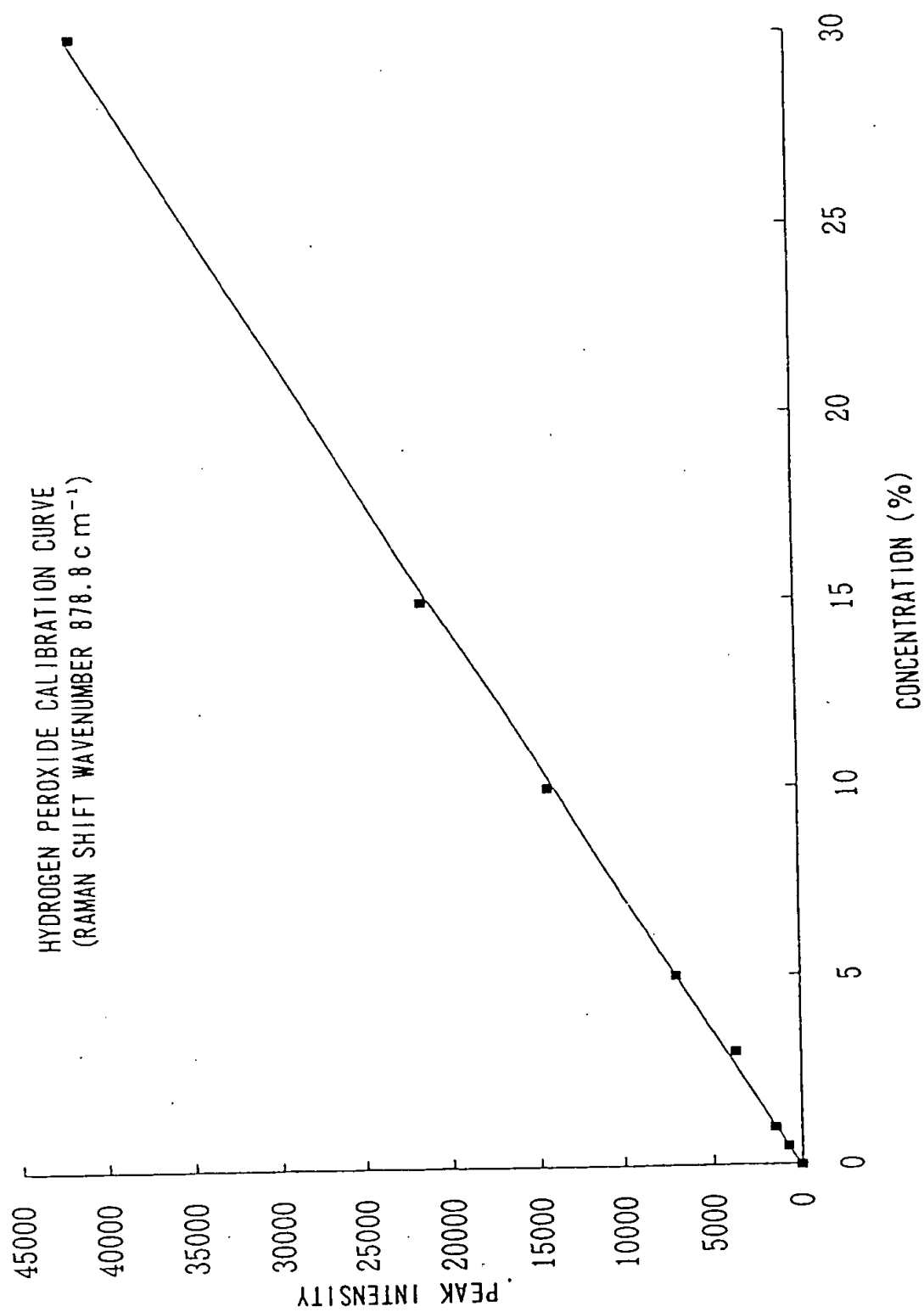


Fig. 5

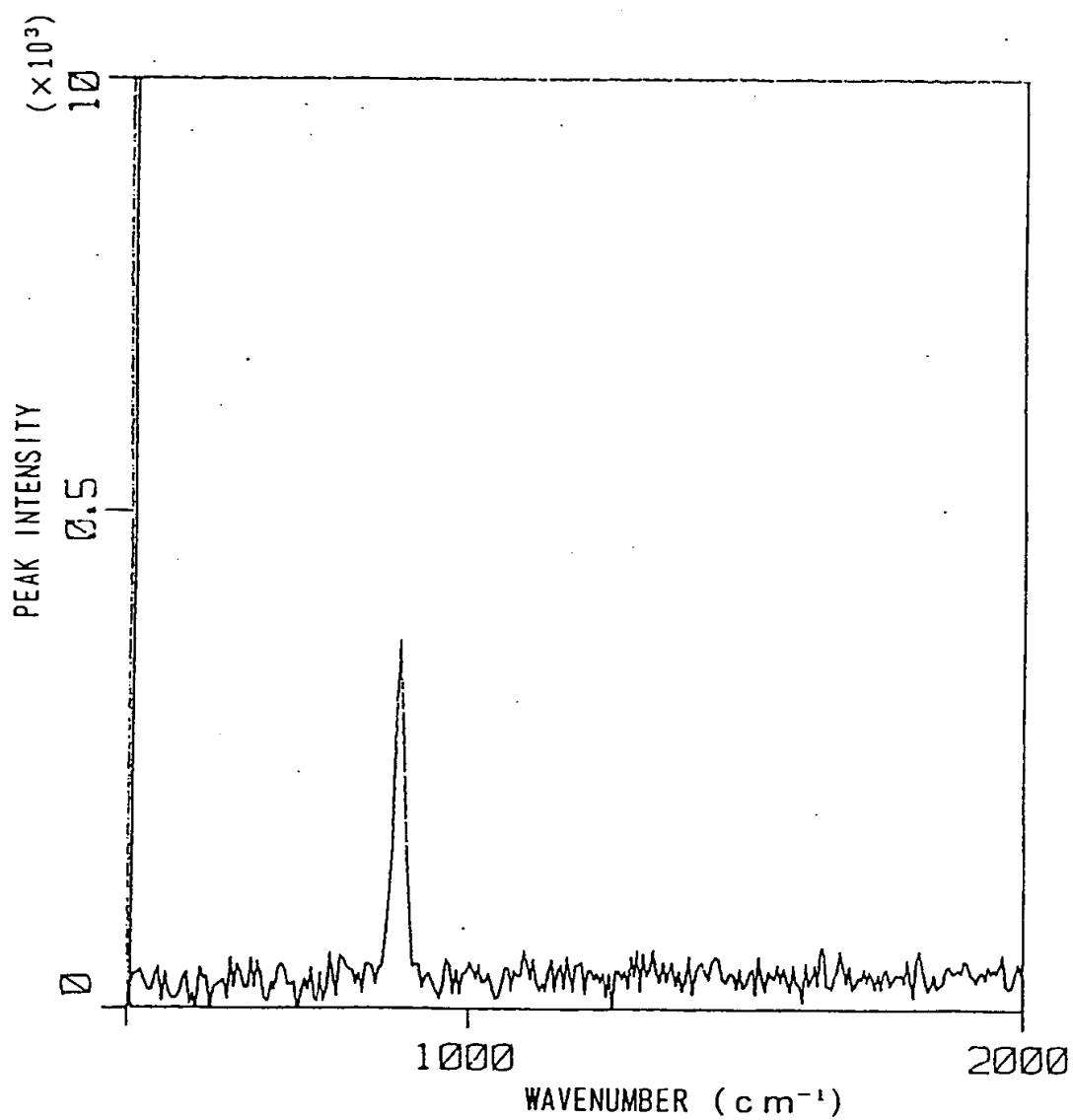


Fig. 6

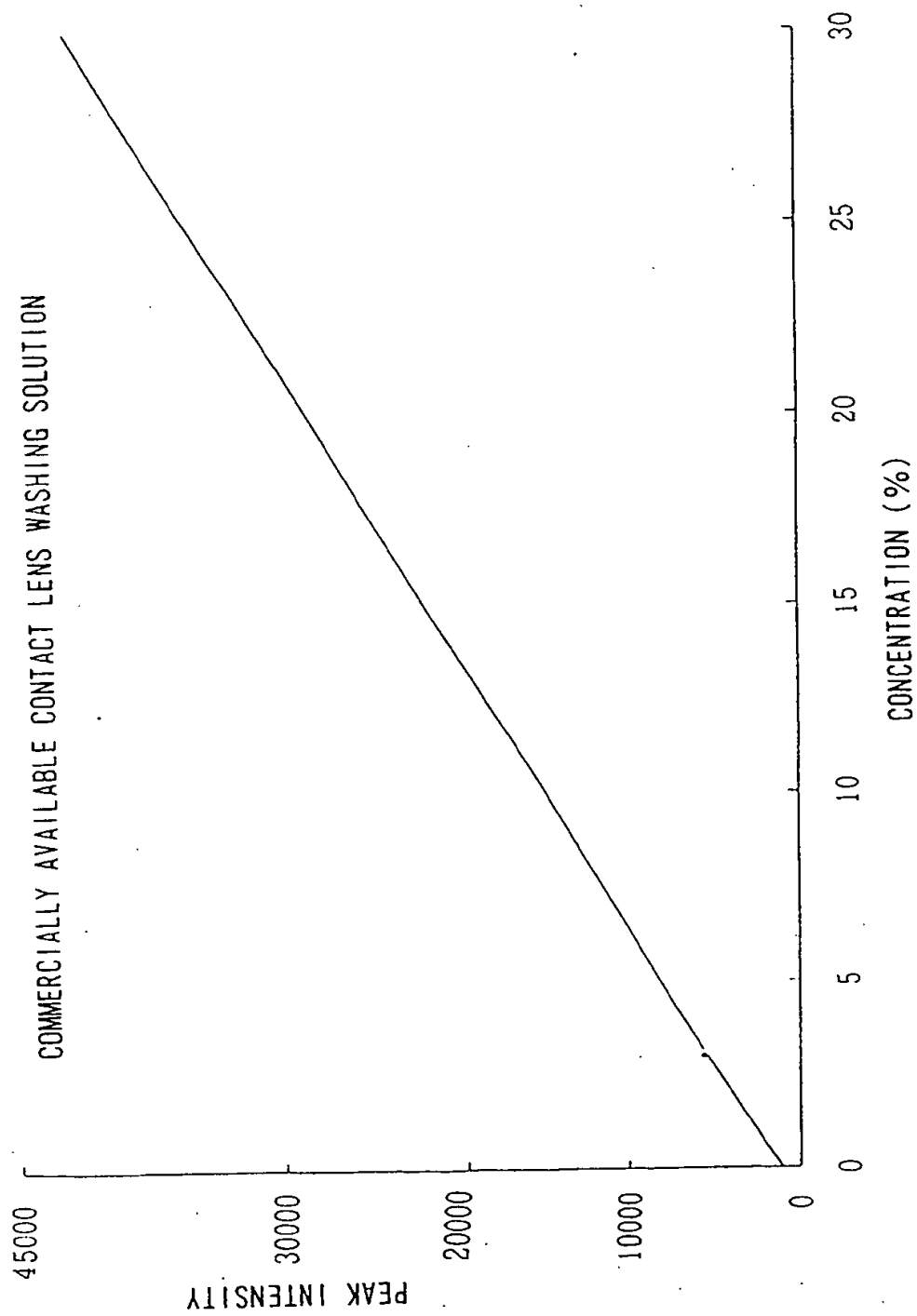


Fig. 7

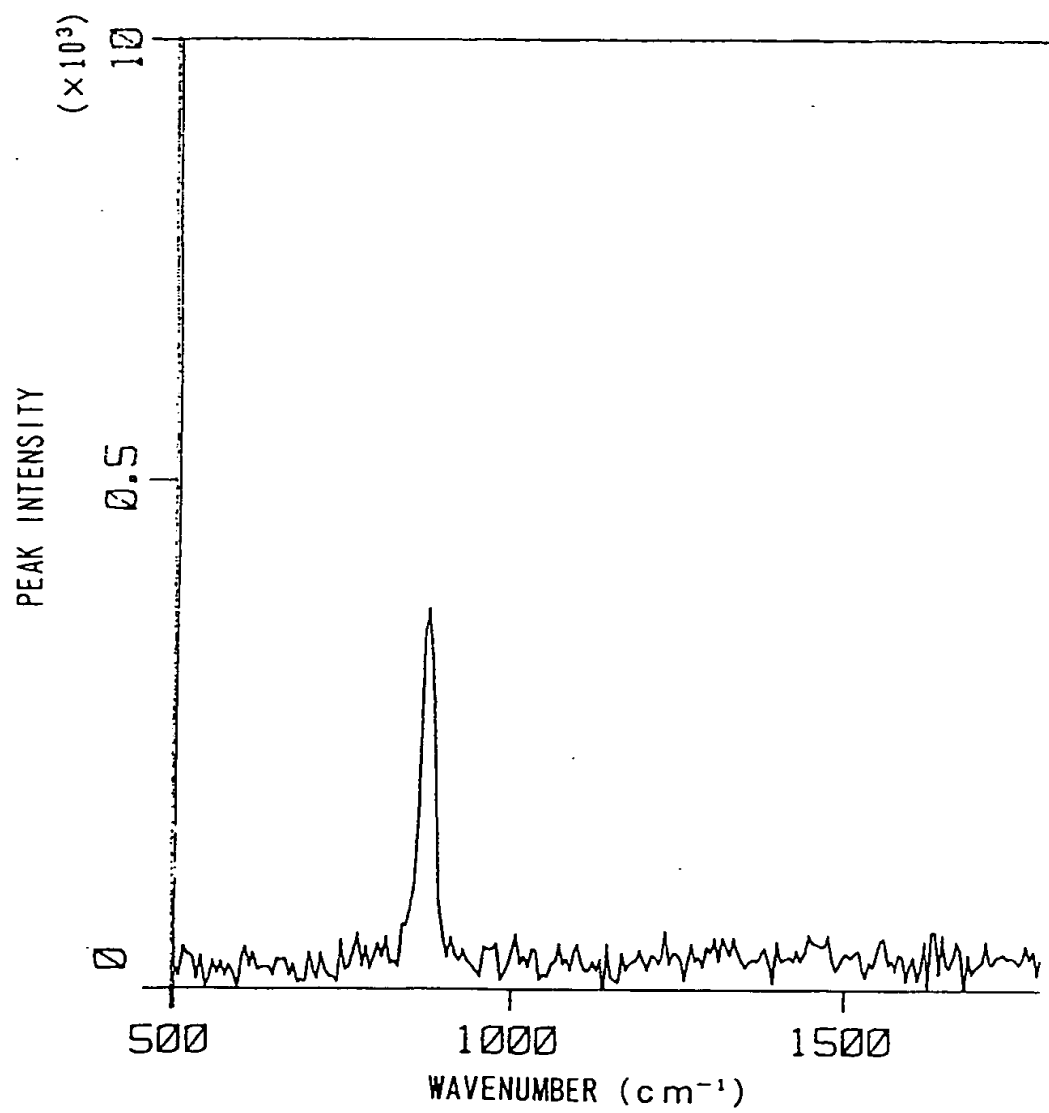
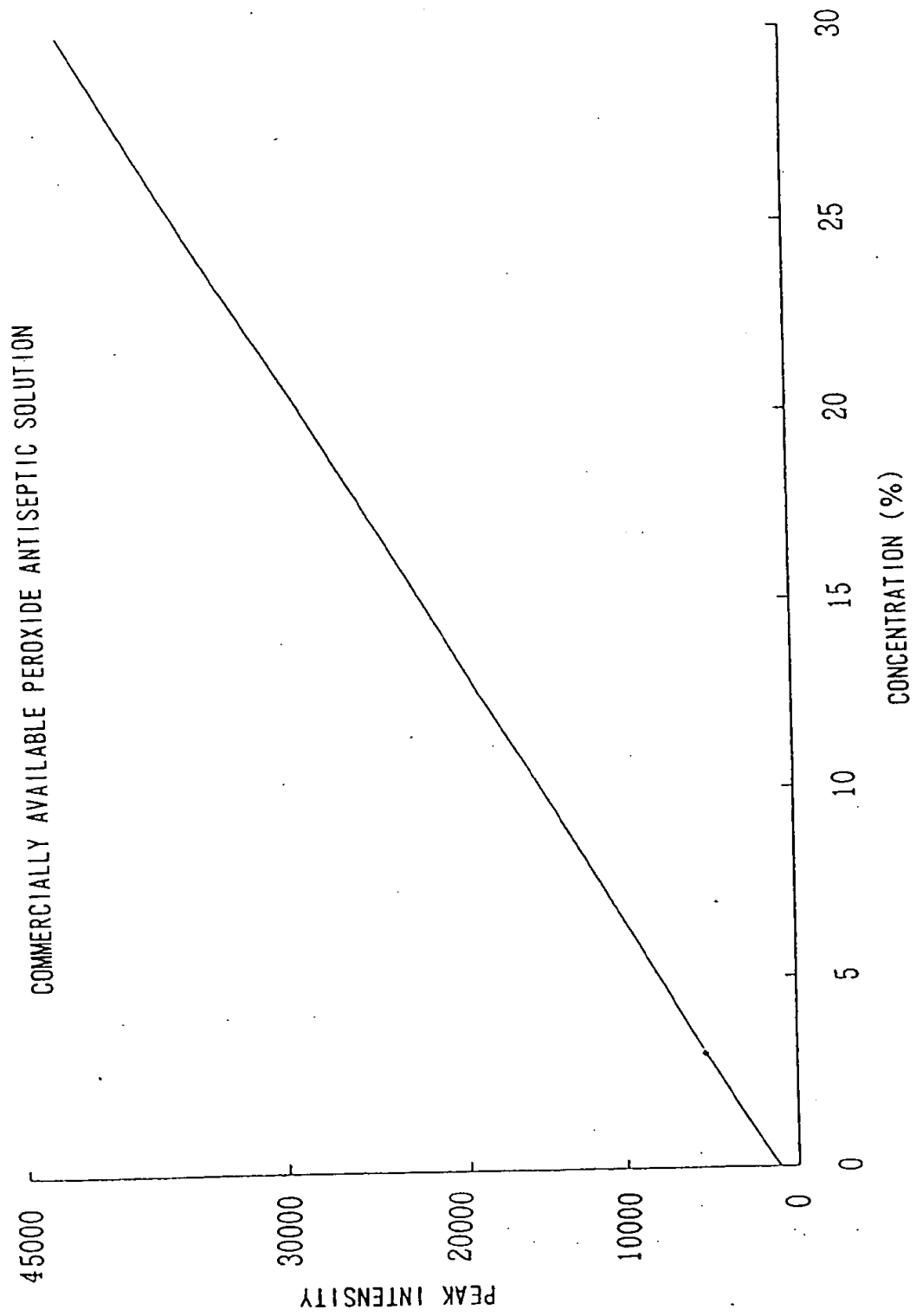


Fig. 8





European Patent
Office

EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 95 11 8554

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int.Cl.6)
A	JOURNAL OF RAMAN SPECTROSCOPY, JUNE 1984, UK, vol. 15, no. 3, ISSN 0377-0486, pages 199-204, GIGUERE P A ET AL 'Hydrogen bonding in hydrogen peroxide and water. A Raman study of the liquid state' * the whole document *	1	G01N21/65 C12Q1/28
D,A	EP-A-0 124 287 (KYOWA MEDEX CO LTD) 7 November 1984 * claims *	1-3,6,7	
D,A	JOURNAL OF RAMAN SPECTROSCOPY, vol. 2, 1974 DORDRECHT,NL, pages 125-132, P.A.GIGUERE ET AL. 'A RAMAN STUDY OF H2O2 AND D2O2 VAPOR' * the whole document *	1,13	
A	US-A-4 714 345 (SCHRADER BERNHARD) 22 December 1987 * abstract; figures *	13	TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int.Cl.6) G01N
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search THE HAGUE		Date of completion of the search 28 February 1996	Examiner Scheu, M
CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application I : document cited for other reasons & : member of the same patent family, corresponding document			

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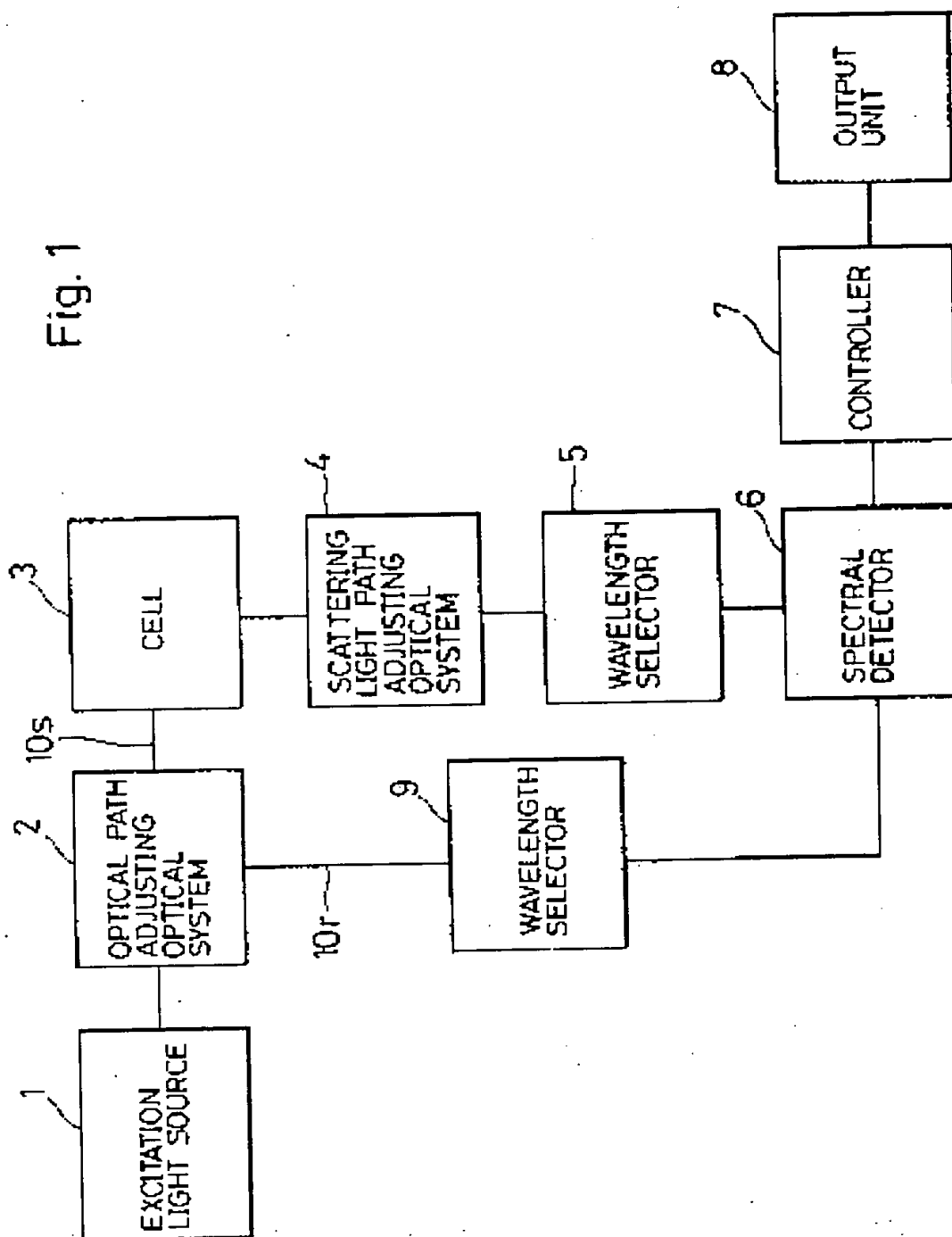


Fig. 2A

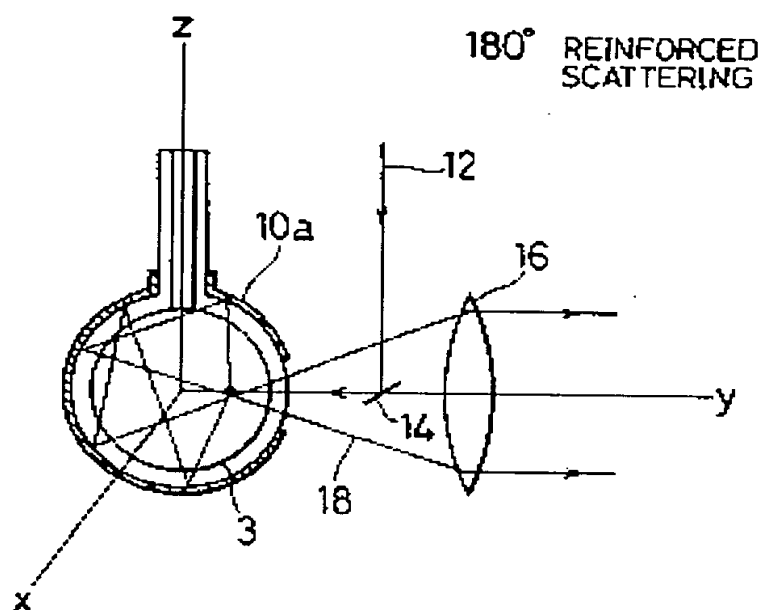


Fig. 2B

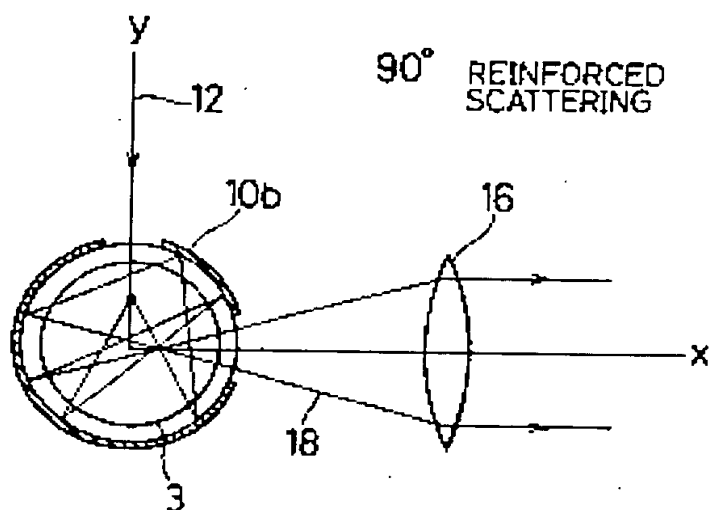
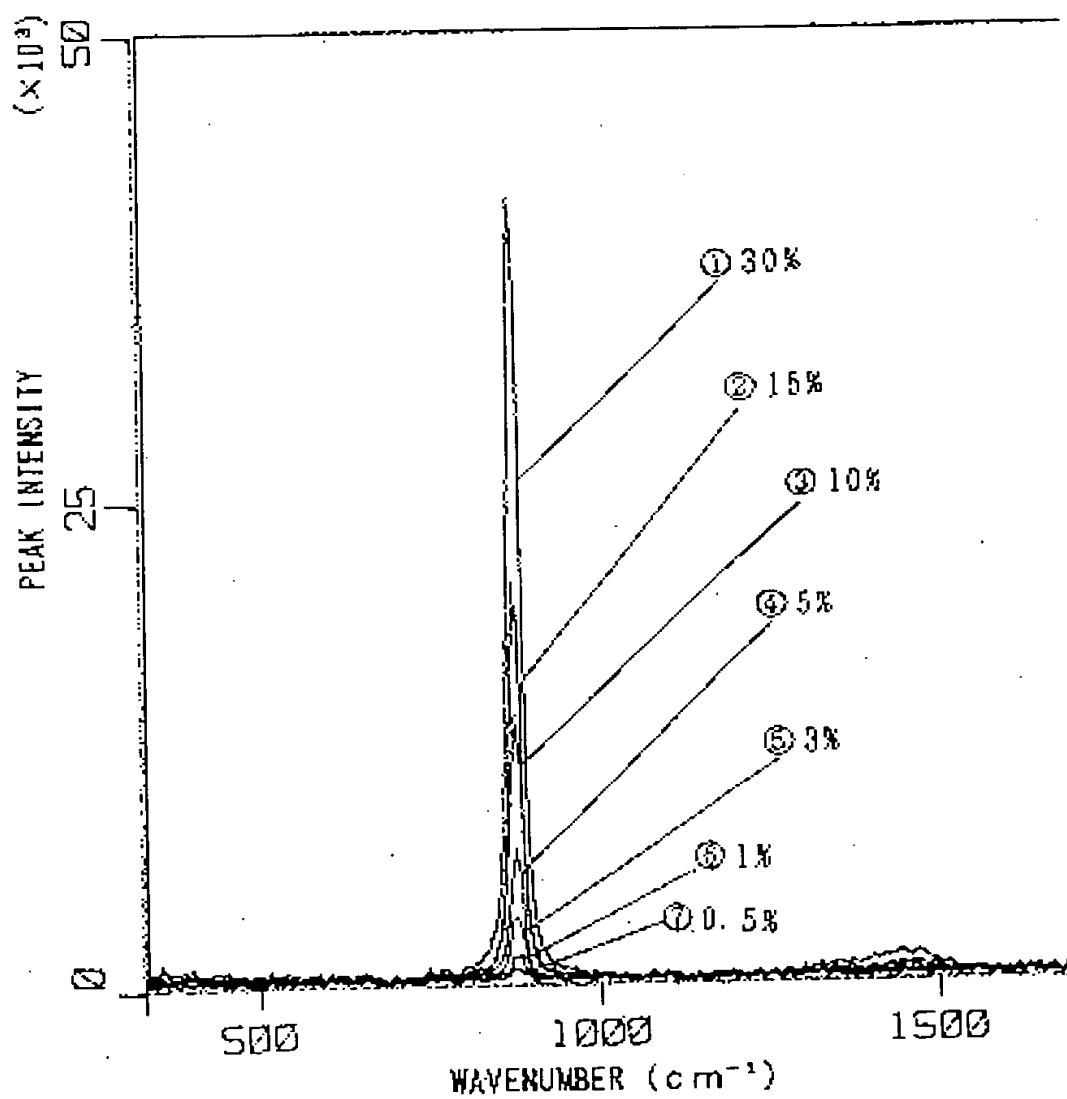


Fig. 3



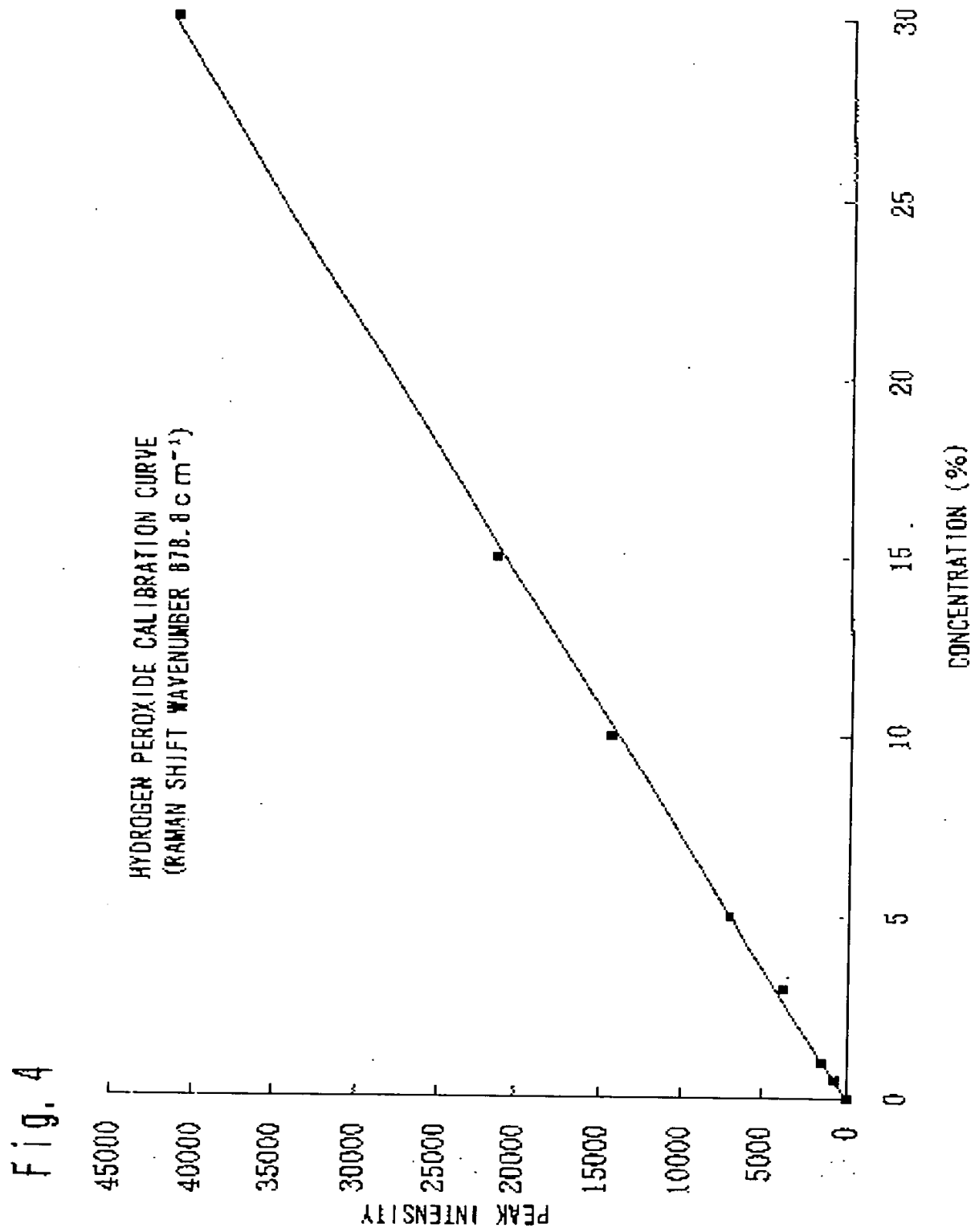


Fig. 5

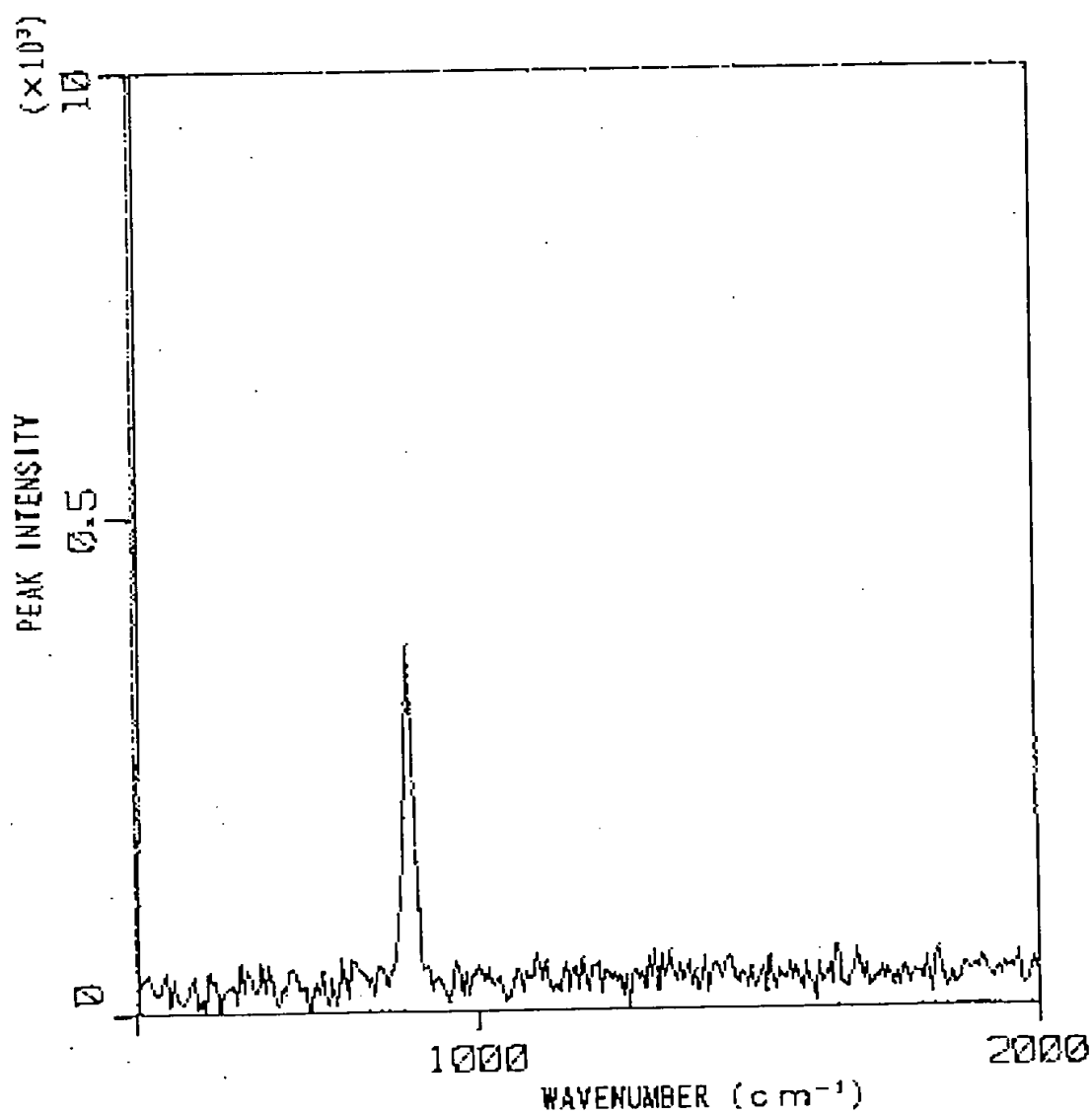


Fig. 6

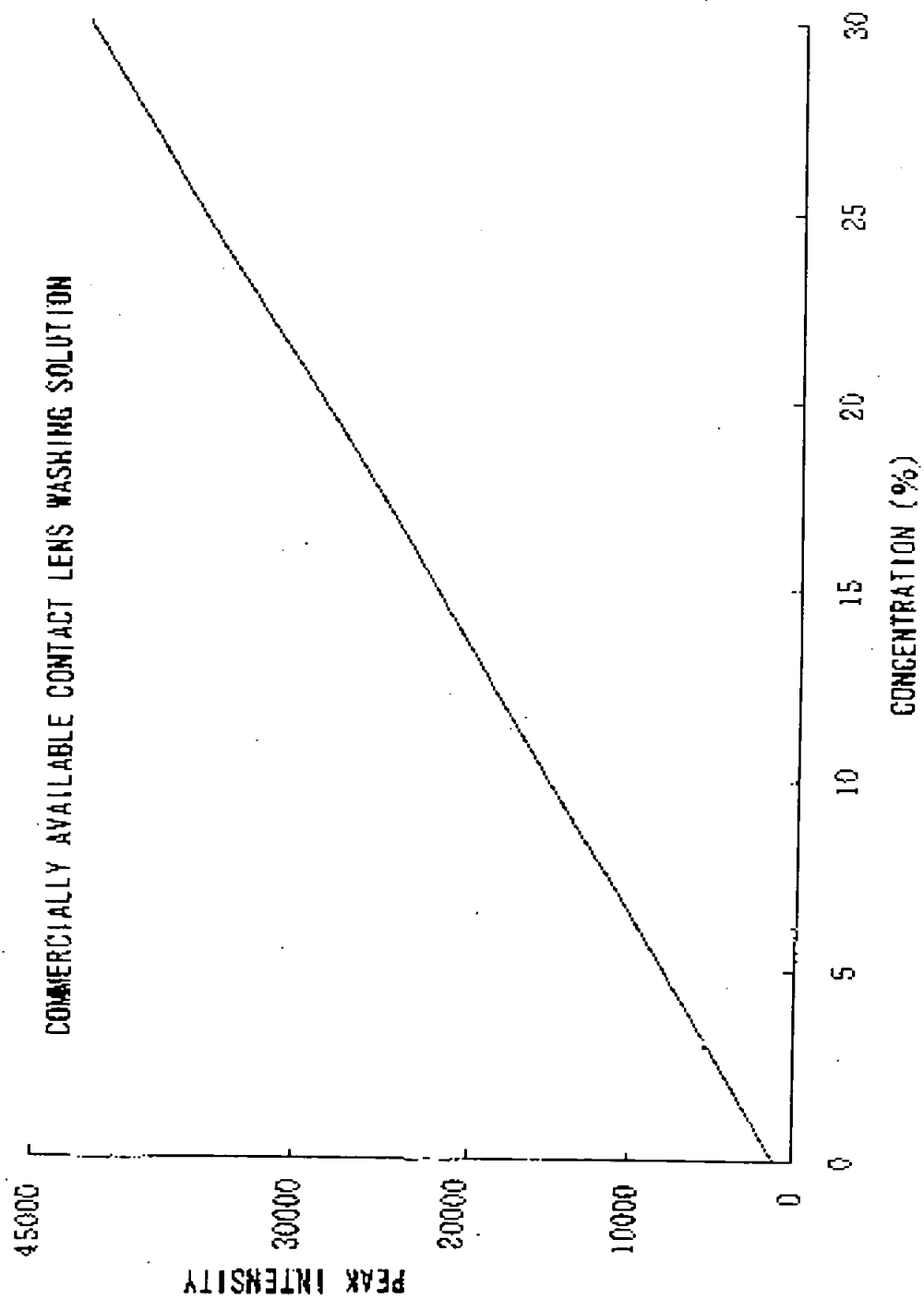


Fig. 7

